



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 8/19/2003

GAIN Report Number: E23157

European Union

FAIRS Product Specific

New Labeling Rules for Eggs

2003

Approved by:

Norval E. Franics, Jr.
U.S. Mission to the European Union, Brussels

Prepared by:

Gerda Vandercammen

Report Highlights:

New EU labeling rules for eggs identifying the farming method will apply as of Jan 1, 2004.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E2]

The mandatory marking of grade A eggs (fresh eggs for human consumption) by a code designating the producer and farming method identification will become applicable as of Jan 1, 2004, following a regulation adopted in December 2000 at which time the USG submitted comments. (Council Regulation 5/2001 of 19 December 2000 amending Regulation (EEC) No 1907/90 on certain marketing standards for eggs. Full text of this regulation is available at http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_002/l_00220010105en00010003.pdf.)

This new requirement is not based on safety concerns, but merely fits into the EU approach of animal welfare and consumer information. (Therefore, the labeling scheme that is mandatory for EU produce does not have to be implemented in the same way by third countries exporting to the EU.)

Each egg produced in the EU has to be stamped individually with one of the following codes, indicating the farming method: O= organic, 1=free range, 2=barn, 3=cage.

For eggs imported from the U.S., the new rules are not totally clear yet. The regulation requires the Commission to evaluate the labeling rules in force in third countries to find out whether the procedures applied offer sufficient guarantees as to equivalence with the technical rules and standards applicable in the European Union. The Regulation further foresees that pending the result of this evaluation, imported grade A eggs may be stamped individually with either a code corresponding to the mentioned methods of production or with a code identifying the unspecified nature of the farming method.

At this point in time, no determination of equivalence with the EU's technical rules has been made.

Visit our website: our website www.useu.be/agri/usda.html provides a broad range of useful information on EU import rules and food laws and allows easy access to USEU reports, trade information and other practical information. E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@usda.gov